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Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Thursday, 18 January 1996, at 10.15 a.m.

Chairperson: Ms. CORTI

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The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES UNDER ARTICLE 18 OF THE CONVENTION (continued)

Combined initial and second periodic reports of Iceland (CEDAW/C/ICE/1-2)

1. At the invitation of the Chairperson, Mr. Peteursson (Iceland) took a place at the Committee table.

2. Mr. PETEURSSON (Iceland) said that Iceland had ratified the Convention in July 1985 and had prepared an initial report in 1987. Unfortunately, that report had never been submitted to the Committee. He wished to stress that that situation did not reflect the Icelandic authorities' attitude towards the Convention or towards the efforts being made within the United Nations to eliminate discrimination against women; on the contrary, the Icelandic authorities wished to do their share to ensure equality between women and men in all areas.

3. The report focused on the situation in Iceland as of 1991, covering the period up to 31 December 1991. In accordance with the Committee's general guidelines, part I contained general information about Iceland, the observance of human rights in general, and the status of women in particular; part II contained specific information relating to individual provisions of the Convention.

4. It was worth noting that Iceland's economy had recovered strongly in 1994, after a long period of stagnation, with exports acting as the driving force; the gross domestic product was expected to have continued to increase in 1995. Unemployment had risen in recent years and had been 4.7 per cent in 1994 - 6.1 per cent for women and 3.7 per cent for men.

5. In connection with article 2, as noted in the report, Iceland had enacted a special law, the Law on the Equal Status and Equal Rights of Women and Men, in 1991. In 1994, a provision had been added to the human rights section of Iceland's Constitution, establishing that all persons were equal before the law and enjoyed human rights without distinction. In the opinion of the Icelandic authorities, those provisions ensured the legal equality of women and men. However, it could not be denied that the de facto status of women in Iceland was worse than that of men. The Icelandic authorities had therefore established a special council, the Equal Status Council, consisting of seven members, to advise the authorities on policy formulation and to work towards full equality between women and men in all spheres of society. The Council reported to the Ministry of Social Affairs.

6. The Complaints Committee of the Equal Status Council, established in 1991, consisted of three attorneys who considered complaints by individuals, both women and men, relating to discrimination on grounds of sex. Most of the complaints received had been made by women and concerned alleged discrimination in the labour market. The Committee received about 14 complaints a year, but it should be recalled that Iceland's population was very small. The Committee's

conclusions were not binding, but if a party did not accept its recommendations, the Committee could file a lawsuit; currently, it had 10 cases pending in court. Out-of-court settlements between parties were expected to become more common, but employers were urging that court rulings should first be made on the Committee's interpretation of the law.

7. The four-year Plan of Action on Equal Rights for Men and Women, adopted in 1991, was currently being revised, but the main emphasis was still on the aspects outlined in paragraph 92 of the report. Iceland also participated actively in Nordic cooperation on questions of equality and was currently working with the other Nordic countries on a Nordic cooperation plan.

8. In connection with article 5, the Ministry of Justice had appointed a committee in 1995 to study the extent and causes of domestic violence in Iceland; the results should be available later in 1996. Another committee was studying ways to improve the situation of victims of domestic violence; among the aspects being studied were whether a police ruling alone was sufficient to impose a restraining order and whether victims of violence should be provided with legal assistance. In 1995, a law had been passed making the State Treasury responsible for the payment of damages to victims of domestic violence if such violence was reported formally to the police and the victim made a formal claim for damages. Sexual abuse was not classified separately from domestic violence, but figures were kept on the number of rape victims. The usual punishment for rape was 18 to 24 months' imprisonment.

9. A special committee of the Equal Status Council was responsible for efforts to involve men and improve their attitudes towards equality between women and men. It had worked for two years to promote a general debate on domestic violence in Iceland. In 1994, it had organized a seminar in Reykjavik on the theme of men against violence and had issued a special booklet on violence which had been distributed in all Iceland's secondary schools. One of the committee's goals was to promote group therapy for male offenders.

10. In December 1982, a women's shelter had been opened in Reykjavik, serving the whole of Iceland. Its aim was to help victims break free of violence and manage on their own; absolute anonymity was maintained. Up to the end of 1995, a total of 2,173 women had sought help at the shelter. State-sponsored school classes were organized for their children.

11. Stígamót, an organization of women against sexual violence, had been established in 1989; it provided support and counselling to women and children who had been sexually abused and also operated as an education and information centre which was open to the public and to various working groups involved in assisting the victims of sexual violence. Over the past five years, a total of 1,700 victims of sexual abuse from all over the island had sought help at Stígamót. Most of the victims had been under the age of 16, and two thirds had been victims of incest. About 80 per cent of the victims were women and girls.

12. A special emergency ward for rape victims had been opened at the Reykjavik city hospital in March 1993. It provided medical, psychological and social assistance to victims of rape or attempted rape and was open to men and women

alike. Children younger than 14 years of age were referred to the national hospital for medical examinations.

13. In relation to article 6, as stated in the report, exploitation of prostitution had been punishable by law for many years. In 1992, the Penal Code had been amended to make any kind of incitement to prostitution punishable by law; trafficking in women was punishable by up to four years' imprisonment.

14. In relation to article 7, Icelandic women exercised their right to vote to the same degree as men. Voter participation rates for both men and women were among the highest in the democratic countries. However, women faced many obstacles in running for public office. Until 1979, women had been on the political sidelines. Since then, they had steadily increased their share of public office, and 25 per cent of the seats in the Icelandic Parliament were now held by women. In the 1995 parliamentary elections, a greater number of women than in the past had led the slates in their constituencies. Women had increased their participation in municipal councils and in 1994, for the first time, had constituted a majority on the Reykjavik city council.

15. Iceland had had a woman President since 1980; she had been one of the first democratically elected female presidents in the world.

16. Since 1985, the office of the Equal Status Council had monitored the share of women in leadership positions within ministries, which had been 24 per cent in 1985 and had increased steadily since then. Women constituted about 20 per cent of the Icelandic Foreign Service, and of 19 ambassadors, 1 was a women who had been appointed in 1991, the first Icelandic woman to hold such office.

17. Preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women had been led by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on behalf of the Icelandic authorities. A special committee had been established. Throughout the preparatory process, emphasis had been placed on ensuring cooperation with women's groups and with the ministries and organizations involved. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs had also issued a booklet reproducing international resolutions on the human rights of women and the report by the Icelandic authorities on the rights and status of women.

18. For many years, the Government had placed emphasis on increased education for women, with the goal of ensuring equal status and rights. The principle of Iceland's education system was that everyone should have equal educational opportunities. The compulsory school system applied from the age of 6 to 16. All children had to attend primary school, with the result that participation was 100 per cent. About 85 per cent of young people completing their compulsory schooling entered some kind of secondary school. Girls' and boys' conventional choices of courses of study and careers were apparent from their areas of advanced study. In the four-year cycle of theoretical studies, girls had been in the majority since 1977, whereas in vocational and technical studies, boys were in the clear majority. Boys' choices was significantly more varied, providing them with a wider range of opportunities when they entered the labour market. That had been a matter of some concern for the Government. At the university level, during the period 1981-1990 the number of students had

increased by 30 per cent, with the number of men increasing by 10 per cent and the number of women by 52 per cent. Women currently accounted for about 50 per cent of graduates from the University of Iceland. At the university level, some fields were considered "women's fields" and others, "men's fields". However, women were entering some traditionally male fields, including law and business administration. Unfortunately, there was no indication that men were attaining equality with women in traditionally female fields; on the contrary, the number of men in the teaching profession, for example, was decreasing steadily.

19. The report mentioned a working group appointed in 1987 by the Minister for Education to ensure that schools were operating in accordance with the provisions of the Law on the Equal Status and Equal Rights of Women and Men. The working group's principal objective had been that girls and boys should be prepared equally for active participation in family life, professional careers and society as a whole. A special task committee within the Ministry of Education, set up to ensure implementation of the working group's proposals, had been engaged in special education efforts aimed mostly at teachers. It had published a special booklet for parents and guardians, and had been involved in a cooperative project for the preparation of secondary school materials on education and careers for both sexes. The committee had recently been replaced by a working group within the Ministry of Education whose tasks included studying equal rights education in schools and preparing for a conference on equal rights in the Icelandic school system.

20. As stated in the report, there was no difference between the sexes regarding entitlement to State scholarships and grants. Students in higher education had the right to special study loans, provided that their educational achievements met certain standards. The amount of such loans was the same for men and women.

21. The issue of functional literacy programmes for adults, and of gender-related gaps in the basic education of women and men, did not apply in the case of Iceland because of the compulsory school system and the high overall standard of education of the Icelandic people. In the area of continuing education for working people, the Government emphasized measures to balance the status of women and men. Legislation on vocational training had been adopted in 1991 and had called for the establishment of a vocational training fund. That legislation was particularly beneficial for women, as a certain percentage of women in the labour market had no vocational training. The Vocational Training Council emphasized support for courses targeting unskilled workers and nursing staff. Women were in the majority in those groups.

22. Regarding the status of women in the labour market, the information in the report was, unfortunately, a few years old. As stated in the report, women had the same legal rights as men with regard to jobs, promotions, vocational training and wages. However, it could not be denied that, in many respects, the de facto and de jure situations were not the same.

23. Women's labour participation in Iceland was greater than in most countries, and recent decades had seen a steady increase in that regard. In 1995, close to 78 per cent of women between the ages of 16 and 74 had been economically active,

while the comparable figure for men was 87 per cent. About 51 per cent of working women and 89 per cent of men held full-time jobs. The average working hours of fully employed women were 44 hours per week, whereas fully employed men averaged 52 hours per week.

24. Until recently, the job division on the Icelandic labour market had been very conventional; however, women were increasingly entering occupations traditionally dominated by men. Women were mainly engaged in general services and in office and retail work, while men tended to be employed in specialized industrial jobs, and machine-related jobs. A significantly higher proportion of men than women held administrative and senior civil service positions.

25. Unemployment had been increasing in Iceland in recent years, and, unfortunately, that situation had affected women to a greater extent than men. In 1994, the average unemployment rate had reached 4.7 per cent; during that year, 6.1 per cent of women had been unemployed. Women and men had the same right to unemployment benefits.

26. Despite formal equality of the sexes and equal rights legislation specifying that women and men should be paid the same wages for work of equal value, repeated wage surveys had revealed that there was a significant difference in the wages of men and women. So far, the wage differential had been explained on conventional grounds, for example, by differences in working hours, the shorter careers of women, choice of work, and different opportunities for securing better paid jobs. However, according to a survey conducted for the Equal Status Council, those conventional explanations did not suffice. The purpose of that survey had been to show how the wage differential was created and where it was to be found, and to determine whether women were discriminated against on the labour market on grounds of their sex, the object being to enable the authorities to eliminate gender-related wage differentials. The survey had shown that there was a considerable wage gap between men and women; taking the average wage as a basis, women earned only 68 per cent of what men earned. Taking into account factors such as professional field, education, seniority, age, number of overtime hours worked and what the job entailed, the daily wages and extra payments received by women were 11 per cent lower than those received by men. The only explanation for those differences was gender.

27. The issue of gender-related wage differences had been brought into the spotlight before the parliamentary elections in 1995. The Minister for Social Affairs had appointed a working group to study gender-neutral job evaluation as a tool for reducing wage differences between women and men. A detailed report was to be presented in January 1996. The wage gap was a problem deeply rooted in Icelandic society and would only be solved through a variety of measures. Totally overhauling the wage system and establishing a balance in men's and women's family responsibilities - which would require a change of attitude towards the roles of men and women in society - were among the measures that had been discussed. The Law on Maternity Leave was being revised to enable men to participate more fully in caring for their children in the first months after birth. Special emphasis was to be placed on the status of women in connection with the revision of the wage system for civil servants and the formulation of a new State personnel policy.

28. Icelandic legislation did not specifically cover sexual harassment in the workplace, but it was generally understood that the Law on the Equal Status and Equal Rights of Women and Men was to be interpreted in such a way as to apply to that problem. Article 6 of the Law stated that an employer could not discriminate against employees on the basis of sex. The same applied to working conditions and terms of employment. Work had begun on studying the extent and nature of sexual harassment in the workplace, and an information booklet had been published, specifying what sexual harassment was and explaining the remedies available to victims.

29. The regulations on maternity leave were detailed in the report. A committee appointed by the Minister for Health was currently revising the existing Law on Maternity Leave, with the goal of increasing men's involvement in the care of young children.

30. The majority of Icelandic children aged from three to five years attended nursery schools on a part-time basis, and the proportion of children attending nursery school had increased to 79 per cent in 1994. In the same year, 21 per cent of children below the age of two years had attended nursery school. It was generally acknowledged that greater efforts were needed in that area. On 1 January 1995, a new position of Children's Ombudsman had come into being. The Ombudsman was the spokesperson for all children up to the age of 18 and his role was to promote full consideration of the rights, needs and interests of children. The general status of children in Iceland played a significant role in shaping the real opportunities for women to participate fully in the economy and in society.

31. The report discussed the measures taken with regard to the special living conditions of rural women and the importance of ensuring that they enjoyed all the rights covered by the Convention. Rural women frequently had fewer opportunities to work outside the home than men, or than women living in urban areas. The Government had taken steps to improve the situation and its proposals were detailed in the report. In 1991, a fund had been established to assist with women's employment problems. Until 1994, the fund had provided support only to rural women, but since then all women had had the opportunity to apply for financial assistance. The reason for the change was that there was little difference in the unemployment rates for rural and urban women. Areas where the unemployment rate among women was relatively high received more attention, and efforts were made to channel grants to those areas. Priority was given to development projects that were considered likely to increase women's job opportunities. The fund had also supported the hiring of special employment consultants who worked with women in particular. Special women's workshops and courses for women in rural areas had received support.

32. From 1986 to 1989, the Technological Institute of Iceland had sponsored courses for women wanting to set up their own businesses. It had been found that a greater number of women were currently running their own companies than before the courses had been held. In 1992, a new course, "Active Women", had been launched, intended particularly for rural women. Special educational materials prepared by the Technological Institute of Iceland were to be published shortly, providing women throughout the country with information on their status and rights.

33. As stated in the report, Iceland complied with the provisions of articles 15 and 16 of the Convention. Article 65, paragraph 1, of the Constitution stated that all persons were equal before the law regardless of their sex, and paragraph 2 of the same article stated that women and men were to enjoy equality in every respect. Equality between the sexes was thus a constitutional right. In addition, article 3 of the Law on the Equal Status and Equal Rights of Women and Men prohibited all forms of discrimination on the basis of sex. Those provisions meant that women had the same rights as men to enter into contracts and to administer property. They were also treated equally in all stages of court procedure. Both parties to a marriage had the right to control their property and were responsible for their debts.

34. According to article 66, paragraph 4, of the Constitution, all persons who were in the country legally had the right to decide on their place of residence and domicile and enjoyed freedom of travel within the limitations specified by law. That provision applied to everyone, regardless of gender. Regarding married couples with children, if the spouses resided at separate locations and there was disagreement between them as to where their legal residence was, the legal residence was deemed to be the residence of the spouse having the care of the children. In other cases of disagreement, the Statistical Bureau determined which residence was the legal one.

35. The Marriage Act of 1993 stipulated equality between spouses. According to article 2 of the Act, spouses enjoyed full equality in their marriage and had equal duties towards each other and their children. They were also required to jointly raise their children, provide for them and cooperate in providing for the family through financial contributions and work in the home. Spouses were to divide domestic tasks between them to the extent possible, as well as the expenses entailed in running a home and providing for a family. They had the duty to provide each other with information on their respective finances and expenditures. Article 7 of the Act stated that a man and a woman could enter into marriage when they reached the age of 18. The same terms of marriage applied to women and men. Upon the dissolution of a marriage, women and men enjoyed the same rights. Upon the division of property, each spouse was entitled to one half of the property that was clearly jointly owned. Spouses had the same right to custody of the children upon the dissolution of their marriage, irrespective of gender.

36. According to article 75 of the Constitution, everyone was free to engage in a profession of his or her choosing, irrespective of gender. The same regulations applied to both sexes regarding family names. The passage of article 65, paragraph 2, of the Constitution on full equality between women and men had removed any doubts as to the equality of the sexes in Icelandic law. Much had been achieved in recent years, but the Government was fully aware that much still remained to be done.

37. The CHAIRPERSON thanked the representative of Iceland for his oral presentation, noting that it followed the Committee's guidelines more closely than did the written report. She congratulated him on the frankness with which he had described the differences between the de facto and de jure situations in Iceland. In the legal field, much had been achieved and Iceland was in some ways more advanced than some other European countries. The purposes and

achievements of the Equal Status Council were most impressive. She welcomed the fact that the oral presentation had emphasized the problem of violence against women to a much greater extent than the reports of a number of other Governments. That reflected a great awareness of the scale of the problem of discrimination against women in that area. It was clear that the contents of the Committee's general recommendations had been taken fully into account by the Icelandic Government. Regarding the participation of women in political life, however, Iceland could usefully follow the example of a number of Baltic and Scandinavian countries.

38. Ms. ABAKA said that report gave insufficient information on specific articles of the Convention. it was unfortunate that, as stated in paragraph 54 of the report, human rights conventions had not been incorporated into Icelandic law, although she was convinced that Iceland was, in fact, adhering to international human rights norms. Nevertheless, the world had become a global village and it was important for people living in Iceland to be able to challenge non-compliance with the articles of the Convention. She urged Iceland to consider incorporating those articles into domestic law, particularly in view of the fact that the United Nations was in the process of drafting an optional protocol to the Convention which would make it easier for individuals to challenge cases of systematic non-compliance.

39. Ms. GARCIA-PRINCE expressed the hope that the next report would follow the Committee's guidelines more closely. Without the oral report, it would have been difficult to appreciate the important changes that had taken place in recent years. The written report was too normative and did not provide sufficient empirical data.

40. It was her impression that there was a high level of organization and commitment among women in Icelandic civil society; it would be useful to have further information on non-governmental and women's organizations. She praised the Government for having incorporated provisions for gender equality into the Constitution and asked for additional information on the role of the executive branch in setting public policy for women.

41. Ms. SCHÖPP-SCHILLING said that it was difficult to respond to the report, since so much recent information had been conveyed only in oral form. She hoped that in future, if such a detailed supplement was to be provided, it would be submitted earlier and in written form. However, she was pleased that such great progress had taken place since December 1991, and was aware that Iceland had recently presented reports to the Beijing Conference and the Committee on the Rights of the Child. She regretted the lack of statistics in the written report, a situation which had been only slightly compensated for in the oral presentation. She recalled that General Recommendation No. 9 of the Committee requested gender-disaggregated data; she hoped therefore that the next report would provide more extensive statistics. She asked whether the written and oral reports had been published in Iceland and, if so, whether there had been any response from non-governmental organizations, and also whether women's non-governmental organizations had had any role in preparing the reports. She also requested more specific information on the steps which the Government planned to take to implement the commitments made at the Beijing Conference.

42. Lastly, the report stated that human rights conventions had not been incorporated into Icelandic law, but in his oral report the representative of Iceland had said that recent amendments to the Constitution had expanded the provisions relating to human rights. She wondered whether that would make it possible to invoke the provisions of human rights conventions under Icelandic law.

43. Ms. KHAN said that she shared the general feeling that the oral report, while lucid, was so different from the written report that it was difficult to frame questions. She welcomed the amendment of the Constitution to prohibit gender-based discrimination, the extension of maternity leave to six months, and the fact that a system had been introduced for the periodic presentation to the public of the platforms for action of specific ministries. She wondered whether it was possible for the public to respond to, and make recommendations regarding, those platforms. She was also pleased at the appointment of a Children's Ombudsman, a post which did not exist in many countries. In view of the great emphasis placed on human rights in Iceland, she felt that the country should consider incorporating the Convention into its domestic law.

Article 2

44. Ms. GARCIA-PRINCE, speaking of the legal protection of the rights of women, said that the Committee needed more information on the Complaints Committee. The representative of Iceland had said that the Committee's decisions were not binding on the parties concerned. She asked what judicial mechanisms existed to protect the rights of women; for example, what court dealt with cases of violence against women, including domestic violence? The representative had said that most complaints received by the Committee dealt with labour violations, but other forms of discrimination existed. The fact that only about 14 complaints a year were received meant either that the status of Icelandic women was quite good, or that women were unaware of the Complaints Committee's existence or unwilling to have recourse to it. The fact that the Government had been surprised at the frequency of cases of domestic violence and the disparities between the wages of men and women showed that, despite efforts to ensure gender equality, a large cultural gap remained.

45. Ms. KHAN observed that Iceland was a party to the European Convention on Human Rights, a fact which empowered the European Commission of Human Rights to receive complaints from Icelandic citizens. She asked whether the Complaints Committee was accorded equal importance with regard to violations of women's rights. She also wondered whether the Ombudsman of the Althing, whose role was to monitor the administrative functions of the State and the municipalities, was responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action or whether another mechanism existed for that purpose.

Article 3

46. Ms. SCHÖPP-SCHILLING welcomed the Government's decision to implement a four-year Plan of Action on Equal Rights for Men and Women. Iceland, with its homogeneous population, could serve as a laboratory for the success of such a plan. However, she felt that there was some ambiguity regarding the dates to be covered by the Plan of Action. She was sure that the Committee would like to

receive, at some future date, information on the results of the Plan's implementation.

Article 4

47. Ms. MÄKINEN asked whether the four-year Plan of Action included any mechanism for ongoing evaluation of its success, whether reports on the Plan would be made to Parliament and whether Parliament would have any input into the Plan's implementation. With regard to the Children's Ombudsman, she noted that there was no equivalent for the post of Equality Ombudsman which existed in Finland, Norway and Sweden. She asked whether there were any plans to institute such a post. She also wondered how the Government planned to deal with the gender disparities in wages.

48. Ms. AOUIJ noted that the law provided for temporary measures to improve the status of women and that it was not considered discrimination to make allowances for women on account of pregnancy or childbirth. She wondered whether there were any other temporary measures to promote the equality of women and whether many men were taking advantage of the recent amendment authorizing paternity leave.

49. Ms. AYKOR asked whether there was a specific national machinery for dealing with women's issues. Paragraph 77 of the report said that the Equal Status Council served as an advisory body, and the representative of Iceland had said that the Council formulated policies and operated under the Ministry of Social Affairs. She wondered whether the Council was, therefore, the designated national machinery for social equality. She asked whether the seven members of the Council constituted its entire staff, whether it was headed by a man or a woman, and whether it had a special budget for dealing with matters of gender equality. She felt that the provision calling for temporary special measures to improve the status of women was an important one and wondered whether the Council was empowered to formulate such measures with regard to gender-related wage discrepancies or to encourage increased representation of women in Parliament.

50. Ms. KHAN said that, in her opinion, the most positive step taken by the Government had been the new law under which the State provided compensation to victims of sexual violence. She asked whether statistics on such compensation were available, who was responsible for deciding whether compensation should be awarded, and what mechanism had been established for those decisions.

Article 5

51. Ms. CARTWRIGHT, expressing dismay at the indication in the report that the provisions of the Convention could not be invoked in the courts of Iceland, wished to know what types of educational programmes were offered to judges, lawyers and other officials responsible for ensuring that the principles of the Convention and other international treaties ratified by Iceland were observed. Such officials must be alerted to the impact of discrimination on women and particularly to the impact of violence against women, especially violence perpetrated by male partners or relations.

52. Ms. GARCIA-PRINCE asked what the Government was doing to combat gender stereotypes that led to discrimination.

53. Ms. BERNARD, commending the Government of Iceland for its efforts to combat violence in the family, asked whether there were any plans to establish Government-run shelters for rape victims, whether rape was a serious problem and whether the maximum penalty was ever imposed.

Article 7

54. Ms. BERNARD, referring to the new and comprehensive legislation on the reorganization of the judiciary, asked for information on the number of women judges and the percentage of women in the legal profession.

55. Ms. AOUIJ, referring to article 12 of the Law on the Equal Status and Equal Rights of Women and Men and noting that the quotas set by political parties had considerably increased the number of women in political life, asked why quotas had not been established for State institutions and whether the Equal Status Council could intervene in that regard.

56. Ms. SCHÖPP-SCHILLING requested more detailed information on the women's political party, particularly its philosophy, its political programme and the gender breakdown of the votes it had received. She would also appreciate information on the extent to which the increase in the number of women in Parliament, on committees and in executive positions had led to an increase in women-friendly policy-making.

Article 10

57. Ms. SCHÖPP-SCHILLING requested more statistics on education and information on courses in women's studies at both the university and school levels. She asked whether, in addition to human rights courses, teachers took courses on sexism; it was very important to change not only the curriculum but also teachers' attitudes. Information should also be provided on whether adult education programmes offered women who were re-entering the labour market courses in women's rights as well as vocational training.

58. The CHAIRPERSON asked whether the Government of Iceland planned to incorporate the Human Rights Covenants and the Convention into the human rights courses taught in schools and universities. That might lead to pressure by women for a change in Iceland's domestic laws to give greater force to international instruments.

Article 11

59. Ms. OUEDRAOGO asked for more detailed statistics, especially on employment. The Committee would have appreciated comparative tables which indicated clearly the occupations and posts where women were concentrated, so as to be able to assess their situation in the labour market. Referring to paragraph 123 of the report, she noted that additional information on the categories of women affected by unemployment would give the Committee a greater insight into the various strategies that needed to be adopted. She would also appreciate

information on any refresher courses or retraining programmes organized for women to enable them to improve their position on the job market.

60. Ms. MÄKINEN expressed surprise at the lack of statistics on the employment situation in Iceland. Noting that 80 per cent of married women were in the labour force, she asked whether 80 per cent of married women with school-age children were employed outside the home. She asked why both men and women had such unusually long working hours, why such a high percentage of women worked part time, and whether single mothers were able to work full time.

61. The representative of Iceland should indicate whether trade unions had been involved in the job evaluation exercise. The next report should provide details on how the evaluation had affected pay differences between men and women. Information would also be appreciated on the current availability of day-care facilities. She wished to know whether any surveys had been conducted on the value of women's unpaid work, and how housework was shared when both spouses worked very long hours.

62. Ms SCHÖPP-SCHILLING wished to know why the employment of married women had risen to such an extent and whether there was a correlation between reliance on overtime work and high rates of female unemployment. She asked whether wages differed markedly among different occupations and whether minimum wages were lower in occupations where women predominated. She wished to know whether the job evaluation exercise had placed emphasis on occupations where women tended to predominate and which involved working closely with people, and whether a higher value had been put on such jobs. Expressing surprise that a government agency had refused to participate in research on wage discrepancies that had been mandated by Parliament, she asked the representative of Iceland to shed some light on the matter and to describe any action taken in that regard. She would appreciate information on the working conditions of part-time workers, since women often constituted the majority of such workers, and on any government plans to extend the provision of child care to the whole day. She also wondered whether schools were open all day.

63. Ms. AYKOR asked how many hours of work constituted part-time employment, whether women held two part-time jobs at once, and whether there were gender-based disparities in the wages of part-time workers. She asked whether the Government envisaged any special measures to increase the employment options of women in rural areas by helping them to set up small-scale businesses.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.